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Efficient communication channels towards the researchers

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Abstract

Efficient communication channels towards the researchers

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Aalto University has over 4000 researchers. While reaching out and informing them about Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE) and its services is one of the tasks of ACE, maintaining a relationship via various channels with the researchers who are aware of ACE is equally important.

Project is part of the development of communication channels towards the stakeholders of ACE. The purpose of the given project was to identify the best communications channels. ACE aims to use these channels that will help to articulate and promote a vision and a set of well-defined goals of ACE and establish closer relation with the researchers.

During the thesis work I studied Corporate Communication and its essence. Further, I studied stakeholders, their types and what is their role in the organization. Understanding how to benefit most from the positioning of communication channels towards the stakeholders is also analyzed at the theoretical part.

During the study work, I studied and analyzed ACE's past communication practices towards the researchers. Afterwards, the Head of ACE and I decided on who to interview that will be most relevant and beneficial. Further on I interviewed interviewees based on a semi-structured questionnaire.

As a result of the study and interviews I came up to the conclusion of having not only channels that increase awareness, but also enable systematic communication with the researchers from different angles, that affect in establishing relationship with them.

Keywords: communication, corporate communication, communication channels, stakeholder

Contents

1. Introduction

Researchers of the Aalto University are key stakeholder for the Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE). ACE is the customer organization of the thesis work and it works hard to provide researchers with the best services to bring researchers' inventions to the market. Therefore client organization intended to start developing communication channels towards its different stakeholders, as well as researchers. The research topic was chosen during the discussion with the organization that was interested in finding out most efficient communication practices with the researchers. Main research question was "What are the most efficient communication channels that can bring closer ACE to researchers' community of Aalto University?"

The research work was done to help organization define best communicational practices that can be implemented both to enhance the awareness of the customer organization, as well as to work on building a relationship with the researchers' community.
The innovativeness of the project showed itself in studying the past and the current communication practices of the customer organization, evaluating its efficiency; finding out practices that haven't been implemented by the organization, yet have an utmost added value to the both of the parties.

In order to reach the goal, first I studied corporate communication and the stakeholder management. The theory is brought up on the first chapter, examines the essence of the corporate communication, why does an organization need to establish an integrated approach to managing communication. Further I bring theory on the role and value of stakeholders to the organization, how to easily and efficiently combine and classify different type of stakeholder and how to consider different group of stakeholders while developing communication channels towards them. This chapter helps to grasp the idea, on how the customer organization can take the relationship with the researchers to the next level - from awareness to the close relation.

After studying the theory part, I moved on to the research work, which is put up in the second chapter. In order to proceed with the research work I gathered communication materials and customer organizations' annual strategy. In addition to it, I collected data from intranet and Communications department of Aalto University, in order to compare how Aalto level communication strategy towards researchers differs from the customer organization's. Collected date gave me an idea of how do schools of Aalto University exchange information between each other, based on the communication scheme.
With the supervisor from the customer organization I put up the list of the interviewees, to conduct a qualitative research based on a semi-structured questionnaire. I chose the

qualitative research over quantitative, with the purpose of having a discussion with the interviewees on the progress of the customer organization's communication strategy over the years, getting to know their opinions on particular communication channels and going deeper into the subject based on their answers that leads to another questions.
As a result of studying different communications channels practiced by the customer organization and Aalto University, channels that haven't been practiced by the customer organization, and channels that interviewees emphasized on whether they had been practiced or not, I came to the conclusion that there is no one, ultimate way of communicating with the researchers. There shall be a set of various active and effective communication tactics for Aalto University has over 4000 researchers, each with different style of working and receiving information from the other schools.
As a result I outlined 2 main approaches, which each of them have their own purpose and sub-channels. These are channels to increase awareness of the customer organization, which is more marketing driven. While another one is the channel with the purpose of establishing and maintaining personal relation with the researchers' community. This channel has 3 sub-channels, which allow customer organization approach researches from different angles.

Thesis process and outcome plays a crucial part in the development of Corporate Communications within the customer organization. Therefore Head of the organization had been closely involved with the process. As researchers are customer organization's key stakeholders, they strive to evolve communication and interaction channels towards them. The outcome of the research helps organization get better picture of the most efficient practices to use for the purpose of creating and evolving relationship with the researchers. The result of the research will be used and implemented at ACE after the thesis will be complete.

Client organization – Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship

Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE) is the main organization at the Aalto University that offers innovation, commercialization, and startup services for the researchers, students and other stakeholders of Aalto University. In addition to that, ACE facilitates innovation and growth entrepreneurship by developing research and education of these areas in all Aalto schools. (Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship overview 2011)

ACE views its customers as in following Table 1 (Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship operation plan 2011):

Segment	Description	Value proposition	Services
Researchers	•Researchers and Professors at Aalto Schools (including doctoral and post-doc students)	•Provide best possible path to commercializing their ideas. •Provide education on IPR management •Provide access to global partners, as well as relevant Aalto Community.	•Company formation service •IPR creation and management service •Networking
Students	•Current students at Aalto Schools	•Teach how to be an entrepreneur •Provide resources to form a company. •Provide network to entrepreneurial community outside Aalto	•Entrepreneur education •Company formation service •IPR Management service •Boot camps and contests •Seminars, Conferences •Networking
Alumni	•Graduates of the Aalto Schools	•Provide access to Aalto innovation and entrepreneurial resources •Access to entrepreneurial students	•IP licensing and management •Networking to Aalto •Networking to Intl Partners •Seminars, Conferences
External Customers (Aalto Community)	•Companies/organizations who seek access to Aalto innovation or entrepreneurial expertise)	•Provide access to Aalto innovation and entrepreneurial resources •Access to entrepreneurial students •Entrepreneurship program	•IP licensing and management •Networking to Aalto •Networking to Intl Partners •Seminars, Conferences •ACE concept

Table 1: ACE customer relationship

ACE strategy and vision are based on Aalto University's strategy, where ACE sees its key role in directing and executing two key development areas of Aalto (ACE Profile and Vision, 2011):

1) Commercialization of Aalto-based research
2) Promotion of high-ambition and high-impact entrepreneurship.

ACE will drive development in these areas by:

- Acting as the leading provider of growth entrepreneurship-related content and services in Finland
- Creating an efficient and business-driven research-to-business process
- Acting as a leader in understanding and acting on strategies related to Intellectual Property
- Linking Finnish research- and innovation-based growth enterprises to international innovation and capital hubs
- Increase substantially the quantity and quality of growth enterprises in Finland by combining tech-nological and non-technological disciplines

Personal objectives

My personal objectives consisted of learning by exploring and doing. I was keen on delivering a project work that has added value to the customer organization and helps me to develop my communicational skills. While I was studying the past and the current communication tactics, my goal was to learn how to plan and carry out identifying and evaluating best communication practices. In addition to it, my goal was to discover the innovative communication channels, by exploring those channels that haven't been in use as of now, yet have a big added value both to the key researchers as key stakeholders, and the customer organization. During the project work I aimed for learning about creating, tracking and maintaining communication strategy to maximize visibility, sustain relation and drive partnership with the stakeholders of the organization.

My personal learning objectives were:

- learn how to plan, carry out and report on innovative development ideas for the for the communications with the researchers
- deeper understanding of the corporate communication and stakeholder management
- positioning communication channels that will appeal to the stakeholders, which will effect on building good relations and credibility with them.
- make development proposals based on survey results, client's past and current experience and personal knowledge

2. Corporate communication

In this section I bring to attention the importance of the corporate communications, the variety of different groups of stakeholders, and their added value to the corporation. In addition to it, how can both of these theories work together and provide with the added value both researchers and the customer organization. (Ferguson 1999, 12)

2.1. The essence of the corporate communication

Whether a one –person company, or a venture with thousands of staff members across the Globe, any corporation experiences communication in any form depending on the business, customers and stakeholders. (Ferguson 1999, 10)

Depending on the size of the company, corporate communication, its channels, strategy varies. Most importantly in order to ensure the effectiveness of the communication, a company must agree with the fact that one way of communication does not work for every stakeholder, or an individual that company deals with. (Zaremba 2010, 17, 83) Stakeholders are all different in the way they perceive the message, as they have various way of working, operating, and dealing with the external and internal network. (Spotts and Weinberger 2010, 63)

An organization performing with the commitment and its energy focused on a clear goal is far more productive than one that allows blur and incoherent messages to spread from the management. Communications is the main way that allows internal and external stakeholders comprehend the vision and direction of a company.

With the development of technology, that allowed people across the world to communicate, exchange messages via different channels, and the big number of studies around the business environment proved that the future of any company depends on how it is viewed and recognized by key stakeholders. Into category of stakeholders can fall employees, press representatives, shareholders, investors, customers and consumers and members of the ecosystem in which the company operates. (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 39 – 51) Management and executives of the companies that strive towards improving their business and relation with the stakeholders, see image of their company as well as its protection as one of the most important tasks and strategic objectives. For this reason a company that has enough of recourses, hires a specialist in the field of Corporate Communication, whose main task is to build up a strategy that will enable a work towards positive corporate reputation. Although corporate practitioner or manager manages this task, the whole company shall be involved in the process of the strategy building, for every member of the company is a representative of it, and can represent it at any time. (Spotts and Weinberger 2010, 65)

Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with the stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent. (Argenti 2003, 21) By putting up and iterating a strategy of the corporate communication, it enables the clear vision on the range of the stakeholders of the company and how will the organization reach out and communicate with them. In practice strategy aims towards managing the responsibility for internal and external corporate communications including advertising, visual identity, corporate marketing communications, displays, the internal communications program and other activities depending on the cooperation and the profile of its stakeholders. (Percy and Elliott 2005, 67-81)

Communication is important for nearly all of forms of organizational activity and therefore necessary for organizational success. It defines structures and shapes perceptions and recognition of individuals and organizations alike.
Communication is an activity that starts within the company in between of all organizational members who are engaged in continuously. The responsibilities of persons in all units – executives, managers and employees-regardless of rank or even job description – require regular communication. According to Zaremba (2010, 5-6) research have attempted to identify the amount of time executives and managers, in particular, spend communicating, and the figure cited suggests nearly 70 to 80 percent of a manager's total behavior involves some form of communication. (Zaremba 2010, 6)

Characteristics and style of the corporate commutations differ depending on the organization, its scope, size, long and short term goals etc. For instance, if an organization has a wide geographical range, such as multinational corporations, or with a diverse and wide range of products or services where the management of communication is often a balancing act between corporate headquarters and the all the divisions and affiliate business units involved.

It is believed by Ferguson (1999, 20) corporate communication requires an integrated approach to managing communication. Unlike a specialist frame of reference, corporate communication transcends the specialties of individual communication practitioners (e.g. branding, media relations, investor relations, public affairs, internal communication, etc.) and crosses these specialist boundaries to harness the strategic interests of the organization at large. (Ferguson 1999, 20)

As a general guideline, concepts in the Table 2 help to put up the strategy and often used in combination with one another. (Cornelissen 2011, 8)

Concept	Definition
Mission	Determining the purpose in line with the values or interest of the stakeholders
Vision	The short and long term aim of the organization
Corporate objectives and goals	Concrete roadmap and model of purpose
Strategies	The step by step planned guide on corporate objectives that need to be achieved
Corporate identity	A "persona" of a corporation which is outlined and designed to reflect the values and business objectives
Corporate reputation	A company's collective representation over the years of existence
Stakeholder	Any individual, group or business with a vested interest (a stake) in the success and achievement of an organization
Public	People who assemble themselves against the organization for some reason or concern.
Market	A defined group towards whom organization might be in demand
Issue	An unsolved distress or concern in between of an organization and one or more publics
Communication	A maneuver and press that can be used to interact with external and internal groups
Integration	The way of managing all communication activities that enables to communicate corporate image's adequately and successfully within the internal and external groups

Table 2: Key concepts in corporate communication (Cornelissen 2011, 8)

Once a company has fixed points in corporate communication, it shall move forward towards building up an effective communication function that will serve a "backbone" role in the communication strategy.

- Defining a company: While positioning a company, management also needs to define them. Brining forward the expertise and authenticity are essential by encompasses its fundamental business model, brand, culture, policies and most importantly, values.
- During the development of the channels for messaging, at the same time start developing networks of relationships. In the business world where we there is a

lot of inflow of the information, building up both-side communication, and eventually a relationship has its own crucial role. One of the key tasks of the communication practitioners is to develop social networks and set of tools and skills of relationship building and collaborative influence – both to seize new opportunities and to respond to new threats.

- Try shifting from changing perceptions to changing realities. In a world of radical transparency, 21st century communication functions must lead in shaping behavior – inside and out – to make the company's a reality (Cornelissen 2011, 33- 40).

After communicating with a consistency, corporation must assess the results of the communication and determine whether the communication had the desired outcome. For instance, did sales rise in response to an advertising campaign, did organization's media coverage increase, and was it positive or negative. After determining the results, Communication practitioners must determine whether that has affected company's reputation, and how it affects towards reconstructing communication strategy. (Spotts and Weinberger 2010, 403)

In addition the organization needs to analyze consistency responses to determine whether the communication was successful. Table 3 summarizes this more complete version of the corporate communicational strategy. (Argenti 2003, 34)

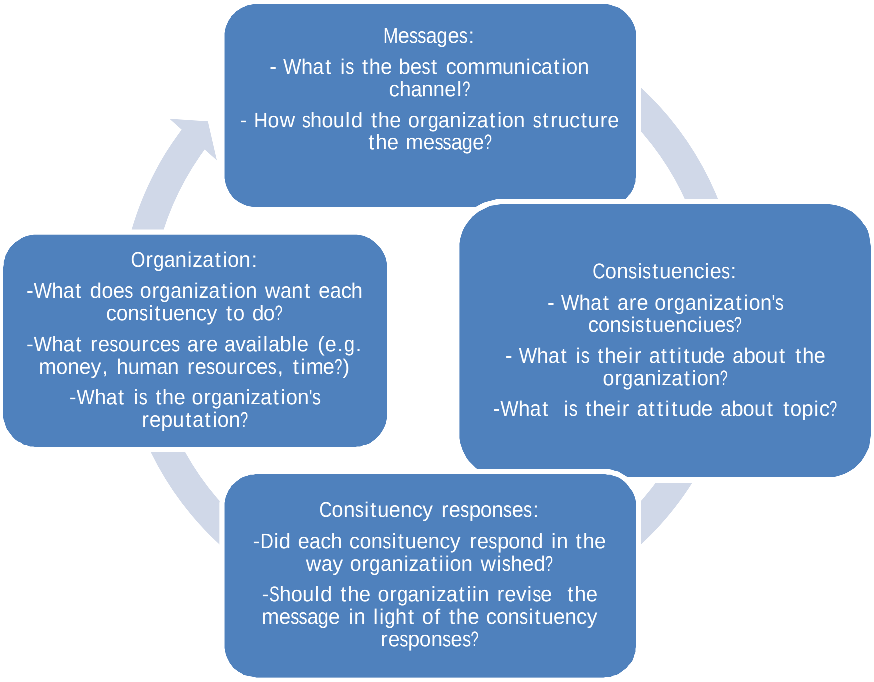

Table 3: Expanded corporate communication strategy (Argenti 2003, 34)

2.2. Stakeholder management and communications

Corporate communication links internal and external stakeholders to the organization, which as a result establishes and supports its reputation and vision, opens up a new opportunities and collaborations. Cornelissen (2004, 42) brought up a good definition of a stakeholders - "stakeholder is any group or an individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's purpose and objectives". (Cornelissen 2004, 42)

A stake that a stakeholder holds, can be described as an interest or a share in an undertaking that can range from simply an interest in an undertaking at one extreme to a legal claim of ownership at the other extreme (Raito 2010, 17). "Stake of different parties and individuals can differ from one another, which will put extra pressure on the organization to balance stakeholder interest". (Bedbury 2001, 38 - 44).

Based on the profile of the stakeholder group and their interest, the content of stakes can and will vary. Special interest groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for example, may demand ever higher levels of "corporate social responsibility", from an organization. Investors may require regular reports, development of the strategy to maximize short-term profits.

According to Cornellisen there are 3 types of stakes:

- Equity stakes - stakes that are being owned by shareholders, directors or minority interest owners that guarantees them direct "ownership" of the part of the organization. (Cornelissen 2004, 43)
- Economic or market stakes – are type of stakes that are owned by group of people who have an economic interest, but not an ownership interest, in the organization, such as employees, customers, suppliers and competitors. (Cornelissen 2004, 43)
- Influencer stakes – category of stakes that belongs to stakeholders that don't have either ownership or economic interest in the actions of the organization, but who have interests as a consumer, advocates, environmental groups, trade organizations and government agencies. (Cornelissen 2004, 43)

By acknowledging type of stakes above, Bucholtz (2008, 67) points out the nature of stakes in terms of the interest of various groups in the organization – whether this interest is primarily economic or moral in nature – and whether this interest is linked in some form through a contract or moral obligation. (Bucholtz 2008, 67)

Assessing stakes based on the interest of a person or group in an organization is primarily economic or moral in nature enables to break down stakes to the categories. Clarkson suggests, in this respect, that there are primary and secondary groups of stakeholders. Primary groups are being those that are critical for financial transactions and necessary for an organization to carry on. In Clarkson's view a primary stakeholder group is one without whose continuing participation and involvement organization cannot survive.

Secondary stakeholder groups are defined as those who generally influence or affect, or are influenced or affected by, the organization but they are not directly involved into financial matters with the organization and are not the core of its survival in strictly economic terms. Press and a wide range of special interest groups belong to the secondary group of stakeholders. Despite not being involved directly into financial and decision making matter, these secondary stakeholders do, however have a moral or normative interest in the organization and have the ability to mobilize public opinion in favor of, or against a corporation's performance. (Pickton and Broderick 2001, 47-65)

Another way of the approach towards stakes is to consider whether stakeholder is linked to the organization by establishing some form or contract or formal agreement, or not. In Table 4 talks about two broad classes of stakeholders in this respect (Cornelissen p. 44):

- Contractual stakeholders are those groups that have some form of legal relationship with the organization for the exchange of goods and services.
- Community stakeholders involve those groups whose relationship with the organization is non-contractual and more diffuse, although their relationship is nonetheless real in terms of its impact.

Contractual groups, including customers, employees and suppliers, are formally linked to an organization because they have entered into some form of agreement; the nature of their interest is often economic in providing services or extracting resources from the organization.

Contractual stakeholders	Community stakeholders
Customers	Consumers
Employees	Regulators
Distributors	Government
Suppliers	Media
Shareholders	Local communities

Lenders	Pressure groups

Table 4: Contractual and community stakeholders (Cornelissen p. 44)

Community stakeholders, on the other hand, are not contractually bound to an organization. This includes groups such as the government, regulatory agencies, trade associations and the media, which are equally important in providing the authority for an organization top function, setting the general rules and regulations by which activities are carried out, and monitoring and publicly evaluating the conduct of business operations. (Goodall, Goodall & Schiefelbein 2006, 25-27)

Exchanging information and an effective communication can support in the development of a healthy relationship between organization and different stakeholder groups. While the interests of stakeholders are entirely varied, and at times are even at odds with one another (e.g. investors will look towards big numbers in revenue, while media tries to catch story of the failing venture), it is important that an organization provides each stakeholder group with specific information and builds a strong image across exchange of all these stakeholders.

The following model makes it easy and efficient to combine and classify different type of stakeholder. Model is called “Stakeholder silence model”. Based on this model, stakeholders are defined on their visibility and prominently to the organization based upon the stakeholder possessing one or more of three attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. The core idea behind this model is that the more salient or prominent stakeholders have priority and therefore need to be actively communicated with. Smaller or hardly silent stakeholders have less priority and it is less important for an organization to spent time and resources for the communication on an ongoing basis. (Goodman and Hirsch 2006, 32, 59)

The first step of the model is to classify and prioritize stakeholders according to the presence or absence of three key attributes:

- power(the power of the stakeholder group upon an organization)
- legitimacy (the legitimacy of the claim laid upon the organization by stakeholder group)
- urgency (the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate action)

Further on stakeholders are categorized and classified based on their relevance to the organization. First three groups of stakeholders are classified as latent stakeholder groups, which are the groups possessing only one attribute.

1. Dormant stakeholders: Those who have the power to impose their will on others but because they don't have a legitimate relationship or urgent claim, their power remains dormant.
2. Discretionary stakeholders: Those who possess legitimate claims but have no power to influence the organization and no urgent claims.
3. Demanding stakeholders: Those who have urgent claims, but neither the power nor legitimacy to enforce them. These groups can be spent time upon, without any or minimal value to the organization, but don't warrant special attention from communication practitioners.

Three further groups are considered as classified as expectant stakeholders and are groups with two attributes.

4. Dominant stakeholders: those who have both powerful and legitimate claims, giving them a strong influence on the organization. Examples include employees, customers, owners and significant investors.
5. Dangerous stakeholders: those who have power and urgent claims, but lack legitimacy. They are seen dangerous as they may resort to coercion and even violence.
6. Dependent stakeholders: those who lack power, but have urgent, legitimate claims. Local residents of a community in which a plant corporation is based, for instance, often rely on lobby group, the media or another form of political representation to have their concerns voiced and considered by a company.

The seventh and final type of stakeholders group that can be identified is:

7. Definitive stakeholders: Those who have legitimacy, power and urgency. They are powerful and legitimate stakeholders who most definitely need to be communicated with. When the claim of a definitive stakeholder is urgent, communication practitioners and other executives have a responsibility to give it priority and required attention.

Corporate communication not only enhances awareness, visibility, way of sending out the message from the company, but also can effect on both ways communication, that can lead to the further cooperation and dialog. Figure 6 describes and outlines the difference between the strategy of simply providing information, or disseminating information with stakeholders, and involving stakeholders and incorporating them in the organization's decision-making process. (Cornelissen 2011, 49)

stakeholder effect	awareness →	understanding →	involvement →	commitment
Tactics	Newsletter Reports Memos Free publicity	Discussions Meetings Advertising and educational campaigns	Consultation Debate	Early incorporation Collective problem solving
Type of strategy	Informal strategy	Informational / persuasive strategy	Dialogue strategy	

Table 5: Stakeholder communication: from awareness to commitment (Cornelissen 2011, 49)

The idea of stakeholder management (Table 5) refers to a method for periodically considering stakeholder interests into account (Freeman & Lifdtka, 1997, 286-288). It is defined as "communicating, negotiating, contracting and managing relationships with stakeholders and motivating them to behave in ways that are beneficial to the organization and its other stakeholders" (Harrison & St John 1998, 14). Extent of managing relationship with the stakeholders varies form organization to organization – ability of performing stakeholder management may reside at one of three levels, proving increased sophistication (Bucholtz and Carroll, 2010, 53-70):

- Level 1 - the rational level, results in identifying the stakeholders and their stakes. This is the level of stakeholder scheme where management looks towards becoming more familiar with their stakeholders.
- Level 2 - the process level, organizations develop and apply processes to study the environment and receive data and information about stakeholders to be used for decision-making. Traditional approaches might include strategic analysis, environmental study and scanning and issues management. At this level taking stakeholders into account is integrated into decision making.
- Level 3 - the transactional level is the final level for stakeholder management – at this level managers usually go ahead and engage in relationships, cooperation with the stakeholders, take the initiative to meet them face to face and try to be responsive to their needs. This communication level is distinguished by communication pro-activeness, instructiveness, genuineness, relevance.

2.3. Communication strategy

Managing corporate communication requires a communication strategy that describes the general reputational position that an organization aims to establish and maintain with its stakeholders. A communicational strategy also provides guidance to specific communication programs and campaigns (e.g. a product launch or an investor meeting). (Steyn 2002, 6-9)

A communication strategy involves the formulation of a desired position for the organization in terms of how it wants to be seen by its different stakeholder groups. Communication strategies typically involve a process of bringing stakeholders in line with the vision of the organization in order to obtain necessary support for the organization's strategy.

By creating a coherent communication strategy based on the time-tested theories, an organization is well on its way to reinventing how it handles communications. Just as important for the firm, it is the ability to link its overall strategy to its communication efforts. (Argentti 2003, 33)

As a backbone of corporate communication, communication strategy has three milestones:

- Strategy formation consists of a combination of planned and emergent processes. In practice, strategy formation involves a combination of logical rational process in which visions and objectives are articulated and systematically worked out into programs and actions, as well as more emergent processes in which behaviors and actions simply arise yet fall within the strategic scope of the organization.

- Strategy involves a general direction and not simply plans or tactics: The term strategy is itself derived from the Greek "strategies" meaning a general set of maneuvers carried out to overcome an enemy. Strategy embodies more than plans and tactics which often have a more immediate and short term focus. Instead, strategy concerns the organization's direction and position in relation to stakeholders in its environment for a longer period of time.

- Strategy is about the organization and its environment: related to the previous point, the emphasis for managers is to make long-term, strategic choices that are feasible in the organization's environments. Managers who manage strategically do so by balancing the mission and vision of the organization – what it is, what it wants to be, and what it wants to do with what the environment will allow or encourage it to do.

3. Study design

In this section I outline approach of the research, method used in conducting the study, along with the questionnaire design. The validity of the research conjointly with the background of the interviewees is also presented.
The nature of the study was positive with the constructive feedback given by the interviewees. Purpose was to receive their insights of the experience in communicating with ACE, how it had been in the past, how did it evolve and change over the years, what were the efficient and non-efficient tactics.

3.1. Type of study

Research approach was based on various aspects. For the purpose of mapping out a set of efficient communication channels, it was important to get the insights of the past and current communication tactics of ACE.
Qualitative method with the semi-structured questionnaire was chosen as the method of the research for the thesis. It was decided to have such method, for a qualitative method of inquiry combines a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further. A semi-structured interview does not limit respondents to a set of pre-determined answers (unlike a structured questionnaire).
Semi-structured interviews are used to get a better picture of how interventions work and how they could be evolved. Such discussions allow respondents to discuss and touch issues that interviewer may not have considered. (Silverman 2010, 204-2006)
For this reason, questions were formed in order to get a better idea of the past communications tactics of ACE, its efficiency and current state. Moreover I aimed to explore other options and ways to communicate with the researchers and the communication structure within Aalto University's schools.

The aim to conduct the interviews was to get closer and deeper picture of how ACE's communication towards researchers evolved over the course, and what are the points that were missed out and need to be paid attention to. In addition to it, I focused on getting to know how do researchers communicate with the other units of Aalto University, and what is the best practices to be implemented. Interviews that I conducted helped me to understand that even researchers, who have more or less same workload, indeed have different ways they communicate with the external organizations. Hence, my main goal was not to find one ultimate way of communicating with them, but rather evaluating existing communication practices, their effectiveness and new practices that have added value yet haven't been executed.

3.2. Reliability and validity

The aim of the study was to have an authentic, reliable outcome that could be achieved during the research work. The research also strived for having reliable practical, executable communications practices. For this reason the interviewees, set of questions and materials that I have studied were discussed and agreed with the supervisor from the client organization. In order to ensure that the outcome of the interviews will be valid, and objective, interviewees as well as the questions were carefully chosen and not depending on the well – chosen "examples". This study aimed to brainstorm the past experience and get the feeling of how to evolve the communication and bring out ideas and findings, not as a result of the statistical procedures, but rather discussions. (Silverman 2010, 45-49)

Therefore, interviewees were from all over Aalto University and very cross-disciplinary, and didn't necessarily need have a history of the tight partnership with ACE.
After the interviews were conducted I went on analyzing them with the tentative results that were also triggered by the analyzing the communication strategy of ACE, refine them and outline the end result. (Silverman 2011, 65)

3.3. Qualitative techniques

"The increasing use of mixed methodologies in a research study and the greater flexibility in data collection methods means that you may have collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Even if you have adopted a positivistic study, you might have collected qualitative data in order to provide richness and give insight to the numerical data. In such circumstances, you may have no philosophical objections to attempting to quantify qualitative data" (Collis & Hussey 2003, 254).
As a methodology I chose face to face interviews with 7 individuals across Aalto University. Questions were open – ended, and did not limit on the initial list of the questions I prepared for the interviewees. This gave the opportunity to probe follow up questions depending on the answers of interviewees.
Preparations for the interview included:

- Selecting a venue for the interview with the less distraction

- Explaining to the interviewees of the purpose of the interview
- Mentioning terms of confidentiality of the interview
- Explaining style and format of the interview
- Inform about the length of the interview
- Bring to the information contact details of the interviewer
- Let know the interviewee that he / she can be outspoken, and express any doubts or concerns about the interview
- Arrange the way date will be recorded – e.g. audio recorder, and taking notes.

Type of the interview was informal, conversational interview - no predetermined questions are asked, in order to remain as open and adaptable as possible to the interviewee's nature and priorities; based on the nature of and feel during the interview I "went with the flow" as different interviewees have different style of answering questions and discussion matters.

When I completed all of the interviewees, I moved on to examining Strategic plan of ACE 2011, I analyzed them, and summarized the communication channels that I am explaining below.

3.4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed in such way that I could meet the study objectives and collect data for the analysis that eventually will bring out the insightful and beneficial results. Although all of the interviewees were from Aalto University, not all of them had an equal amount of interaction with ACE in the past, which was helpful while outlining questions on, where did they notice the gap in the communication between two parties.

Questions (see Appendix 1) were put up in a manner that, allowed me to get the information about past communication experience with the ACE, and possible future practices. Questions were open ended and research work wasn't did not limit in them. The style of interview was flexible by asking questions and having discussion based on the answers of the previous questions, and what kind of subjects did the previous answers trigger. For instance, during the interview all of the interviewees emphasized on the importance of the developing personal relationship with the researchers, that initially wasn't presented as a main question.

3.5. The profile of the interviewees

Interviews were conducted within 7 interviewees, each of them being interviewed face to face. The interviewees were selected based on their experience and input to research, entrepreneurship and communication within Aalto University.

- Risto Ilmoniemi - Risto is a professor and Head of the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Computational Science. He is also one of the world's leading experts in MEG and TMS techniques. During his term as Academy Professor from the beginning of 2012, Professor Ilmoniemi set out to develop completely new brain imaging methods, the most ambitious of which is simultaneous MEG and MRI. Risto was a CEO of Nexstim Ltd. and is currently advisor for the Senseg Ltd (Aalto University web page). Risto is a good example of an entrepreneur with the strong background in the research area; therefore he was chosen to be interviewed, as in addition to his main job, he is active in entrepreneurship area.
- Jukka Seppälä - Dr. Jukka Seppälä, professor of Polymer Technology, is one of the most active inventors in Aalto University. Dr. Seppälä is one of the inventors in more than 40 patent families that are related to manufacturing of polymeric materials and biopolymers made of renewable raw materials. Dr. Seppälä has been working with ACE's Innovation Services for several years, and appreciates help in developing strategies and writing up agreements to protect inventions as well as technical handling of invention disclosures. As Risto, Jukka is also entrepreneurial researcher, with the own venture. (ACE web page)
- Henri Simula - Henri Simula is project manager at the BIT. He is recently involved with the Developing Customer Centric Marketing Communications (DECCMAC) project. His insights were valuable to the thesis work, for he is close to Aalto's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and is involved with numerous entrepreneurial and research programs.
- Pauli Laitinen – Ex-Head of Innovation Services at Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship, Pauli has an extensive experience in building the bridges between ACE and researchers, supporting Technology Transfer Managers while managing case works.
- Panu Kuosmanen – Technology Transfer Manager at ACE. Panu worked at ACE longest than any other current employee. He joined ACE back when ACE was Otaniemi International Innovation Centre (OIIC), and was living its first days. With his knowledge and connections, Panu helped OIIC to establish itself, increase the network, in particular within researchers' community and grow bigger. As having worked both at OIIC and ACE, Panu has a very good idea on how

has ACE evolved, how this evolvement showed itself in terms of the relation with the researchers, and effective were communication tactics both at ACE and OIIC.

- Teemu Seppälä – Marketing Manager at ACE. Teemu also worked at ACE, back when ACE was OIIC. He manages various marketing activities that increase awareness of ACE both in Finland and outside of it. Teemu has a big part in the developed of ACE's image and increasing the network of it.
- Eeva Lehtinen – Head of Internal and External Communications of Aalto University. Eeva manages internal and external communication of Aalto University, which builds ties within Aalto and outside of it. Her insights were helpful in understanding the structure of Aalto's communication, how does information flow from one unit to another, what kind of information goes online, and getting to know Aalto's communication representatives of each school, that helps reaching out to the researchers from each school.

4. Communication channels towards the researchers

I start outlining the result of the research in the form of the communication channels and communications approach. First I introduce the role of the Communications Coordinator, for all the activities in this field are part of his / her job.
Result of the study was very eye-opening, for it opened such communication approaches that haven't been initially considered. As a result I divided communication perspective to two parts:

- Approach that enables enhancing awareness of ACE, which is more marketing driven approach.
- Approach that triggers development of the personal relationship between researchers and ACE. This approach is less marketing driven, and more partnership, regular communication, cooperation driven.

4.1. Communication coordinator's role

The role of the communications coordinator is to outline the strategic plan for reaching out and maintaining relations with researchers through various direct and indirect communications tactics. Communications coordinator shall work closely with the marketing department as well as innovation services team, for innovation services team deals directly with the researchers.
While outlining the communications plan, coordinator shall iterate it within the ACE, and constantly overview the steps and activities to include.
In addition to these tasks, communications coordinator need to set up links with the communication liaison of Aalto University, and regularly inform them of the activities

happening at ACE, and to get informed of the activities happening within the Aalto University.

4.2. Communication channels

From my research I have come to the conclusion that communication with the researchers' community has two approaches. One approach is marketing oriented, that helps to increase the awareness and enhance the presence of ACE. Another approach is more, personal one. This can be achieved over the years, by building yup relation via various activities. The later approach also has hints of marketing; however it is more interpersonal and closer, while the core of the marketing approach is not to get to know every single individual closely, but rather spread the word about ACE and maintain its image.

Because of one communication channel doesn't work for everyone, I have combined set of different tactics that can enable both increasing awareness and presence of ACE and built the relation with the researchers as well as communication liaison of Aalto University. In addition to establishing and maintaining communication strategy, coordinator needs to review the strategy and its effect, get to know if strategy was of any help, and what shall needs to be improved, and eventually upgrade the strategy that will be even more efficient. Coordinator needs to report to the management on the benefits of applying communications strategy and get the approval for modified strategy.

4.2.1. Enhancing awareness

Ideas brought up in this section carry the purpose of enhancing awareness of ACE. Novelty in this approach is that, these tactics approach directly researchers, and not in a broad form, as it is currently. In other words, whether It is online content, or offline, it needs to have a content that relates to researchers and also needs to be delivered directly to their communication channels, rather having it on ACE's web page only.

Online channels:

Online communication is the easiest and fastest way to spread the message and make connections in the world where a lot of people do use computers and the internet. In fact, as it is unrealistic to be able to meet all 4000 researchers every single day, it is much convenient and time, cost efficient to put up the web content. There are various ways to reach out to researchers and spread the message of ACE both using indirect and direct approach.

- ACE web page: as ACE has various stakeholders, we need to verbalize and express ourselves depending on the profile of the stakeholder and what services do we offer them. For instance, Innovation service is directly focused on researchers, as researchers are the one who invent anything. For this reason, Innovation services need to have its own personal tab (or section) that contains all the details that a researcher need to know, of what do we offer them. That section needs to be put in a simple way that it will be easy to browse it and find needed information. For instance, information on patenting, licensing, technology transfer, applying for ACE's grant need to be put in a sub-tab format so it will easy to spot it once a visitor lands the page. In addition to it, page needs to be upgraded and kept fresh on a weekly basis.
- Social media: - social media is perhaps one of the most cost efficient marketing tools right now. It is also another way of creating and strengthening relation with the community. ACE is on four social media web sites now – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Yammer. All of these accounts need to be regularly (at least 3 times a week) be updated by a communications coordinator. In addition to it, questions, comments need to be followed and answered so there will be a dialogue between ACE and community.

Offline channels:

- Printed materials: In addition to having general ACE materials, printed materials need to have options focused on the researchers and the services ACE offers them. These materials need to be updated at least once a year, for the purpose of promoting current services and showing success from the last year.
  Printed materials such as brochures, booklets, roll-ups, stickers shall be distributed within the schools, so that ACE will have its presence there.

- Newsletters: Communications coordinator need to consider the fact that there are a lot of happenings happening at ACE, and for the researchers it can be challenging to catch up with everything, and visit ACE's web page open regular basis, or because of a huge flow of the information, to be able to extract the most important one. For this reason, it is beneficial to put up for instance once a month good newsletter with the relevant information for the researchers, and send out to those who have subscribed. Starting creating newsletter s and sharing them with the researchers also can show how big is the community of researchers that follow ACE's news, for we can see the number of them from the amount of people who subscribed to a newsletter. Newsletter shouldn't be sent out too frequently, if there is no interesting, fresh content, for it can lead subscribers to get bored, and eventually unsubscribe. Minimum amount of bullet points for the newsletters shall be news, updates, announcements, success stories, contact information of ACE's personnel per school.

- Aalto magazine - Aalto University's magazine for stakeholder focuses on science and art, technology and business; it describes how they converge and write about the people behind our stories. The magazine appears four times a year from 2012 onwards. Magazine is widely read by Aalto's community, as well as researchers. ACE hasn't had presence in that magazine yet. However, ACE needs to bring most interesting news and stories and offer editors to get it included to the magazine.
- Events: Arranging events with the topic that will capture researchers' attention is helpful, and is a good way of both promoting ACE and doing it face-to-face. Not less important is to attend the events of the researchers, to participate in their happenings. As the part of the research work we co-organized one of the weekly coffee meetings of Department of Biomedical Engineering and Computational Science - "BECS coffee" seminar. "The BECS Coffee Seminar showcases organizations and projects, contemporary research at BECS to catalyze collaboration among the researchers. It also serves as a venue for practicing, e.g., master's thesis and conference presentations and as a forum for talks by visiting researchers. BECS has regular coffee meetings, at least once a week. The purpose of these meetings is to get a speaker from outside of BECS, present his company, organization and start building relationship." (Department of BECS Coffee Seminar description, web page)

There were about 50 researchers who attended the get together – more than we can see during one week. Face to face getting to know each other, having interaction and communication helped a big deal to learn about each other closely.

Department of Biomedical Engineering and Computational Science BECS

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Cellular level biophysics
Biomedical image processing
Brain imaging
Cardiac studies
Engineered and Artificial systems
Computational Systems Biology
Models and Methods
Bayesian Statistical Methods

BECS Coffee Seminar

The BECS Coffee Seminar showcases contemporary research at BECS to catalyze collaboration among the researchers. It also serves as a venue for practicing, e.g., master's thesis and conference presentations and as a forum for talks by visiting researchers.

The seminar is organized every Wednesday (except when there's overlapping activity) at 2:15 PM (coffee and biscuits served at 2:00 PM) in the BECS Coffee Room (F336). The talks usually last about 15 minutes.

The Coffee Seminar is organized by Lauri Kovanen, Roman Volinsky, Mari Myllymäki, Dmitry Smirnov and Julio Hernandez Pavon. All researchers with potential talks are encouraged to contact them.

Seminar schedule, spring 2012

Date: May 2, 2012
Speaker: Stina Immonen (Aalto SCI)
Topic: On the ongoing study reform of the Aalto Bachelor's degree studies

Date: April 27, 2012
Speaker: Will Cardwell, Head of Aalto Centre for Entrepreneurship (ACE), and Zaira Mammadova, Communications Coordinator at ACE
Title: Introduction to ACE and AppCampus
Abstract: ACE: Aalto Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE) aims at creating business success stories from the science and art within Aalto community, and working as a catalyst for elevating high ambition entrepreneurship from Finland and through the Baltic region.

AppCampus: To drive innovation and business opportunities in Finland's mobile ecosystem and beyond, Microsoft Corp. and Nokia will each invest up to 9 million euros into a newly established mobile application development program at Aalto University during the next three years. The AppCampus program has been set up to foster the creation of innovative mobile applications for the Windows Phone ecosystem, and in addition, Nokia platforms, including Symbian and Series 40, to create a new generation of self-sustaining mobile startups.

http://ace.aalto.fi

Picture: 1: Department of BECS coffee seminar release (BECS web page)

Following is the check-list of how to prepare and execute fruitful event, seminar at the Departments. (Eric Groves, 2010, 2)

When, why?

- When you have something unusually or exceptionally interesting to tell to the researchers.
- Most important question: What news does ACE have to tell? Such events are not meant for many little pieces of news or background information – that's a background briefing.

Questions to ask before the press event:

- Do we really have something so important and so new to tell that we should organise an event?
- Instead of a mass event, could we serve the researchers better personally: contact them and brief them on the phone/over lunch?
- Why is a press, news release not enough for this news? Why should researchers come to see an event? What more can they learn about this by coming?
- Just because an organisation has a foreign guest speaker does not mean they should always organise a press conference! You can also offer one-on-one interviews, etc.

Invitation

- Send invitations at least two weeks prior to the event.
- Be short and clear: time, place, topic/theme, programme including end-time. Maximum half a page of text less is better.
- Remember to send a reminder e-mail. If you know someone in person, call them directly.

Program

- One hour is a good amount of time for an informative event.
- Plan presentations carefully and make sure they do not last longer than 15 minutes each!
- Only the most important topics are included in presentations.
- Always start by giving some background: What is ACE, who are the key people, what do you aim to do. Give some context: How is ACE different from other similar organisations and who are the most important "competitors" in Finland and globally? Try to offer a neutral, professional perspective on who you are and what you do.
- Generally 3–4 speakers per event is usually enough, one outside expert is always a good idea – it gives more credibility to the event and adds value the news you are telling.

- Use about 30 minutes for presentations and 30 minutes for questions and comments.
- After that reserve time for individual interviews.

Materials for the visitors

- Gather everything in a press kit, print it out and distribute at the event.
- Press kit can contain for example: press release, presentations, fact sheets, background info, publications, speaker biographies, company story, programme, etc.
- Also possible to do a “goodie bag” with something extra apart from the information and facts, a little present, a book…

Event and follow up

- Hosts should be at the location well in advance.
- Check that microphones, lights, IT, etc. work, check that buffet/coffee/food is OK.
- Is sign or a poster at the door needed?
- Organise materials on a table by the entrance door.
- Will you need name tags for hosts?
- 1–2 people should be at the door welcoming guests coming in and directing them to the event space, show where coffee/food is, introduce key people, etc.
- Take photos for your own use.
- When event is finished, make sure everyone who has asked or who requests a personal discussion gets one.
- Try to speak with every guest to get feedback, ask if they have any more questions, hand out business cards, etc.
- Follow up with the visitors the next day: call/email and ask if they need any more information, do they need more information, want to book a meeting, etc.

4.2.2. Increasing relation

While communication towards increasing awareness of ACE is the essential part of the ACE strategy, it is also important to get closer to the researchers and establish personal relationship. As researchers deal with a lot of confidential projects, building the trust with the people they deal with is crucial, and it takes time and commitment to build it up. Promoting ACE via different channels, whether it’s online or offline doesn’t necessarily build a personal relationship. A researcher can visit ACE’s web page, or have a brochure of it, but this is not effective way of building bridges between both parties. In order to build and maintain sustainable relationship structure, having awareness isn’t enough. Relevance of ACE to researchers brings more value, for researchers know that

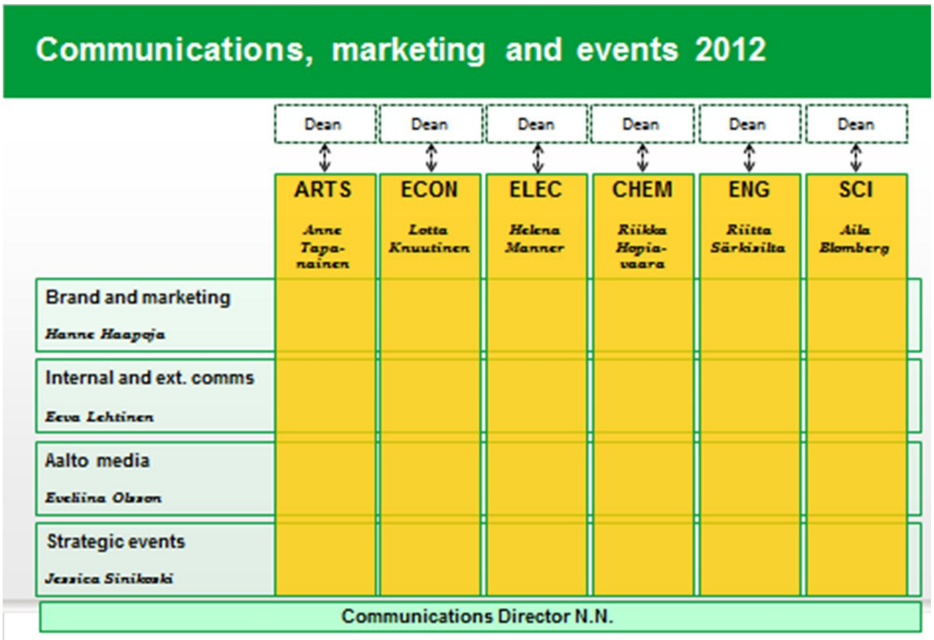
time spent with ACE is valuable and can bring a good outcome. As well as, content drives communication, for it guarantees that time spent together will be worthy.
As a result of the research I have came to the conclusion that there is a gap between different personal approaches towards researchers. Below I am dividing direct communication with the researchers to following 3 groups. Some of them are very strong, some need to be developed.

- Project / case based relation – this relation is mainly in between of Technology Transfer Manager that owns the case and the group of researchers to whom project belongs. This approach is very well evolved, for one of the main tasks of ACE is to help researchers to commercialize and bring to the market their work. As TTMs main work is working with the projects, they have constant meetings with the team both at ACE and at the departments. As a result, ties between researchers' team and ACE are getting stronger.
- Communication coordinators relation – it is a relation between communications coordinator and coordinator of the innovation services at ACE with the research assistant of the departments. As both parties are well aware of the happenings of the offices they belong to, it helps to strengthen relations between two parties, with the regular and sustained connection, for one of the main tasks of these personnel is to maintain relation both internally and with the external stakeholders.
- Strategic level communication - this is a relation in between of the Head of ACE, Innovation Services and Head of Departments. Having it more on a strategic level, main content of the communication would be going through administrative tools, development relation between ACE and the Departments it serves, familiarizing Head of the Departments with all the updates that are meant to serve researchers and their work. This communication is very much confidential. Type of relation brings a lot of value to both parties, as researchers know very well the Head of Department they belong to, therefore they can get news, updates from him directly.

4.2.3. Approach through the Aalto University level Communication

Another way of communicating is through Aalto University's channels. As researchers are employees and students of Aalto University, they are more aware of on Aalto's channels to the internal and external audience. The role of the Communications coordinator here is to explore and get to know the structure of the Aalto-level communication, communication liaison and start cooperating with them.

Picture 2 shows how information between Aalto's communication department and Aalto's schools flow within. This form enables to all schools be up to date of each other's on goings, and inform their own departments about the happenings in other schools.
Every week communication liaison of Aalto University gets together and goes through the news and updates, makes decisions on what goes to the web and what doesn't. In such meetings communications representatives of Aalto University participate. Services of Aalto University, such as ACE, need to send their content to the Aalto Communications Department, in order that this content will get reviewed on weekly meetings.



Picture: 2: Aalto University Communication scheme (Aalto University Communications strategy)

Communication coordinator of ACE shall be closely involved with the ongoing at ACE and collect the content during the week and by the end of the week share it with the contact communication person from Aalto Communications department, that on Monday of the upcoming week this matter will be reviewed at the meeting.
Once information reaches main Communications department, it automatically reaches out representatives of Schools' communication departments. As each school's communication representative is well aware of happenings at the school, it is more beneficial keeping in touch with them and providing them with the information that researchers can benefit from.
Table 6 lists Aalto's online communication channels towards external and internal audience. While, having presence at the online communication channels for the external audience is beneficial to ACE, it is important for the ACE to focus producing content and

being up to date with the internal online communication channels, for Aalto's researchers belong to the internal audience.

<table>
<tr><th>External</th><th>Internal</th></tr>
<tr><td>- Aalto University aalto.fi
- Aalto school's websites
-For future students: studies.aalto.fi</td><td>-Inside for Aalto staff: inside.aalto.fi
-Inside for Aalto students: into.aalto.fi</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">-blogs.aalto.fi
-wiki.aalto.fi
-Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin</td></tr>
</table>

Table 6: Aalto's online communication channels (Aalto University Communications strategy)

4.3. Summary of the channels

Options that were brought up above are not the only channels and ways of communicating with the researchers. They were selected based on the research, and analysis of what kind of channels work best in terms of building the bridges with the researchers. Some of these channels are currently put into practice, some don't.
As mentioned before, based on the study and research I came to the conclusion of two types of approach towards the communication:

- Approach to increase the awareness
- Approach to build the interpersonal relationship.

Below I will elaborate and summaries why have these particular approaches and hence channels been selected:

Approach that increases awareness carries purpose of marketing and promoting ACE and its services, activities, tools etc. In addition to it, they can also lead to the beginning of the interpersonal relationship. Channels that are used for this approach are online and offline channels.

Online channels that include web page, social media tools, presence of ACE on Aalto University's internal and external web pages. These channels need to have a content focused towards researchers, and is normally one way communication. Added value that these channels offer, is that a researcher doesn't need to physically come to ACE's premises to get informed about it, but rather can updated on the latest news, information on ACE's tools and services to the researchers online.

Offline channels' include informative printed materials, frequent gatherings at the departments of Aalto University's schools, arranging ACE's events and participating at the Departments' events. Added value that these channels is that, it is much easier to approach more researchers if ACE arranges an event, get together within the departments, than approaching researchers one by one. From the example of the visit to BECS weekly coffee seminar, we can see that once such gatherings happen frequently it turns into a form of branding of ACE. It gives the image that ACE does not just operate from its premises, but also goes and reaches out to researchers physically.

In addition to it whether it is via such events, or having in general printed materials, they need to be upgraded at least twice a year. Printed materials need to have reflect both the services of ACE as well as promote the successful cases that come from the departments, with the purposes of both promoting the case and motivating researchers. Having mentioned the purpose and the added value of the channels that increase awareness of ACE, it is important to mention that such activities and tactics can eventually lead to the interpersonal approach.

However it has to be natural and needs to flow easily. As I mentioned earlier that content creates relevance, therefore it makes it much easier and natural to engage into frequent discussions, meetings.

Biggest positive side of reaching out to researchers in terms of the personal level, is that by dividing them into 3 groups we manage to reach out to the community from 3 different, most efficient angels. From my research, I got to know that as of now at ACE approach of the direct communication with the researchers was practiced, whereas continuous, regular communication with the research assistants, assistants at the departments, as well as heads of the departments is equally important. What makes it important is that, this way we approach researchers' community from different angles. Research assistants and head of departments are in a close relationship with the researchers, and are well aware of the ongoings at the departments.

Objectives in this channel are to approach researchers from different angles. It ensures that ACE communications strategy is organizationally driven rather than communications driven. These communications activities are not an end in itself but should provide and therefore be aligned with the organizational objectives of ACE.

Being in touch with the admin team from the departments, helps not only build bridges via the different way, but also get involved into the activities, happenings at the departments.

5. Conclusion

My work was important for the organization from an organizational perspective, since researchers are very important stakeholders to ACE, and there has not been any similiar study conducted before. Thesis work was a part of the development of communications towards the key stakeholders of ACE. The entire outcome and the result will be put into action afterwards.

As a result of the project work, I used Cornelissen's "method of dividing stakeholder based on their roles towards the organization in order to allocate researchers to the category that relates to their role towards ACE". Researchers fall into "Community stakeholders" category, because, while their relationship with ACE is non-contractual and more diffuse, their relation has big impact and effect to ACE, as well as by evolving relation with ACE it can increase their interest in ACE's services and eventually trigger the collaboration.

I came to the conclusion that there is no one ultimate channel of communication with the researchers. There are over 4000 researchers across all departments and schools of Aalto University, and what works for one researcher, might not work for another one. For instance, one researcher might be active on social media and get most of the news about ACE from there, while another one prefers to get updated from the content of the Inside Aalto, whereas another researcher relies on fellow researchers' recommendation only.

While one way does not work for the entire community of the researchers, ACE needs to be careful also with the amount of variety of communication channels it is using. That is why during the research I worked on getting to know what are the tactics ACE used, how effective they were, and if there are other ways of communication with the researchers that ACE has not been implementing yet.

During the study, I found out that, while ACE is very active on its own web page and social media, ACE has not been using often Inside Aalto (for staff researchers) and Into Aalto (for student researchers). Moreover, ACE has not had a strong connection with the Communication liaison of Aalto University and benefitting from their service, which is natural way of reaching out to the researchers. This set of information, let us understand the importance and essence of the Communication liaison's existence and the fact that ACE shall start not only informing liaison on its happenings but also start building relation with them, for it can lead for a deeper understanding of between two parties.
In addition to finding out ways of letting know researchers what is are ACE's updates, I found out that communication via marketing activities is not the only way of building bridges with them. Aligning communications and organizational objectives that enable the development of the personal relationship with the researchers will also help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications and thereby make a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communications activity within ACE. (Buchholtz and Carroll 2009, 541-542) For this purpose, from ACE's perspective building bridges with the researchers via different angles - Technology Transfer Managers, communication coordinators and management of ACE, enhances the relation and covers different kinds of ways and levels of interpersonal communication.

Cornelissen's table of "Stakeholder communication: from awareness to commitment" allowed visualize the approach to the different kinds of communication channels very well. As the scope of the project was to identify the best communications channel, I filled in columns that belong to this concept in the Table 7.

stakeholder effect	increasing awareness	→ enhancing relation
Tactics	Online: - ACE web page - aalto.fi -inside.aalto.fi -into.aalto.fi -Newsletter -Social media tools Offline: -Informative events -Participation at the Department's events - Printer materials - Presence at the Aalto University magazine	Building a 3 way approach to the researchers: - Project / case based relation - Communications' coordinator relation - Strategic management relation Establishing relation with the Aalto Communication liaison that eventually leads to the passing information to the researchers via them.
Type of strategy	Informal strategy	Informational / persuasive strategy

Table 7: Communication with the researchers

Once the communication channels start to be implemented, it is beneficial to be able to evaluate their effectiveness. For that purpose I applied example of Argenti's "Expanded corporate communication strategy" which enables to understand all the levels starting from the start point until the end, where it again begins with the start point. Great point of setting up such chart is that it allows having the longer vision of the communication tactics and their benefit, as well as understanding what the researchers felt towards ACE by these tactics, what were pros and cons of it. Table 8 expands ACE's view on identifying how these tactics affected ACE's reputation, and based on the feedback how to evolve the communication tactics.

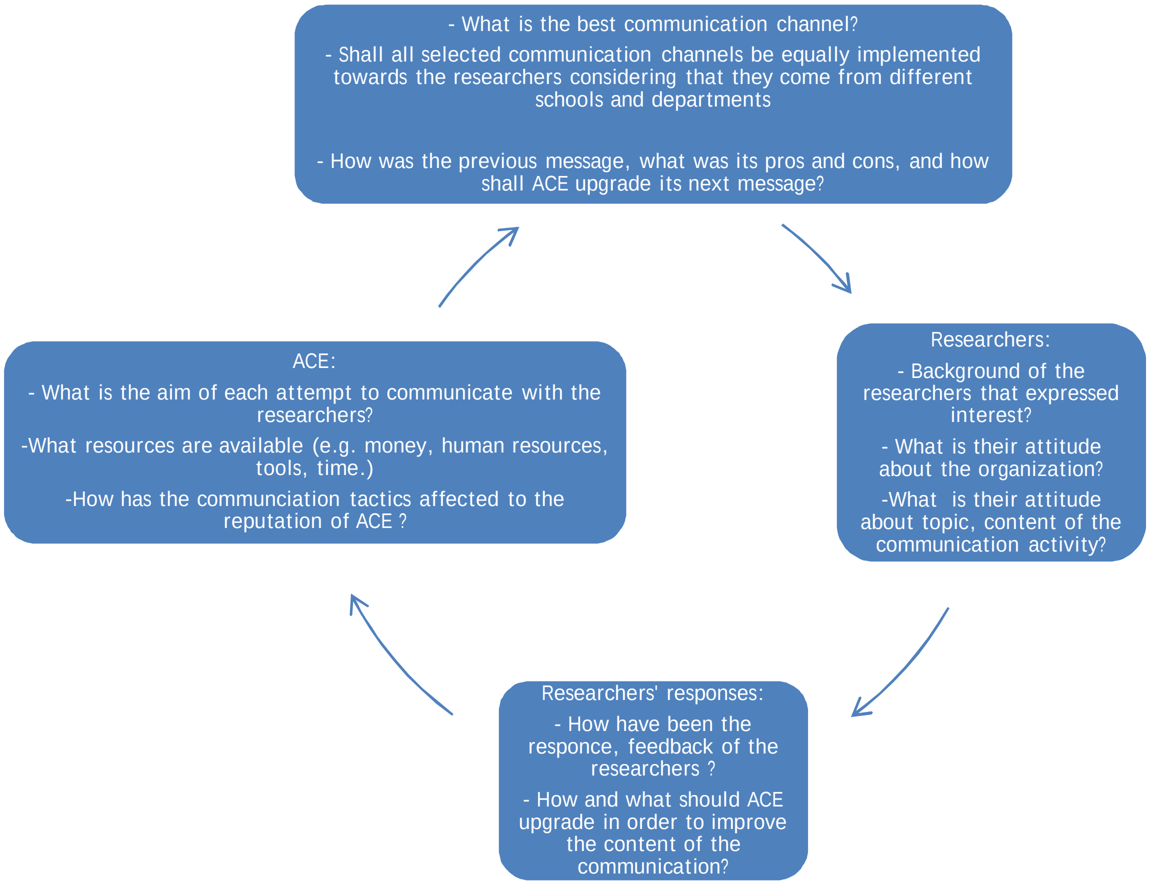


Table 8: ACE expanded corporate communication

My overall opinion about the outcome of the research was positive and valuable for the development of communication channels. I was satisfied with the cooperation with the project leader, and the decision we made together on the channels need more attention and need to be evolved.

I was also pleased with the pace of the research, and meeting my learning objectives. Studying theory, and implementing it in practice, discovering new channels that initially haven't even been on the radar was eye-opening and very rewarding.

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Tables

Pictures

Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

- How has communications towards the research community evolved during the last 3 years? What has affected it?
- How do you observe current state of the communication towards the researchers from ACE? What are the gaps?
- How have you observed communications channel within Aalto services towards researchers?
- From your observation and experience, what is the importance of the communication channels towards researchers and how effective have it been as of now?
- What is the message researchers want to hear from ACE as it being Aalto University's unit that manages technology transfer, intellectual property management, startup company formation, and the teaching and research of growth entrepreneurship?
- How do you feel regarding the role of the communication coordinator at ACE that manages communicational activities between ACE and Aalto researchers, considering that we ACE didn't have specific person for this role so far?
- Explain the effectiveness within the researchers of following communication channels?

- Online
- Printed
- Events/meetings/get together

- How do you feel are the best activities regarding the following communication effects:

- awareness : e.g. Newsletter, Reports, Memos, Free publicity
- understanding : e.g. Discussions, Meetings, Advertising and educational campaigns
- involvement : e.g. Consultation, Debate
- commitment: Early incorporation, Collective problem solving